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TEMPERA COLOR PROCESS—A NEW MEDIUM FOR DESIGNERS

Felix Payant

WHILE, of course, a process is worth very little in itself without a personality with ideas to back it, yet it is often stimulating and productive to venture into new fields for the purpose of exploring. Usually at least, the reward is experience in trying out one's ideas in a new key—if not actual profit and mastery resulting from having found a response to that difficult problem of finding a channel through which to give expression to our art impulses, assuming that we have some. But I hesitate in presenting another art medium, with all the excellent ones we are already familiar with, lest we become over zealous with handling materials and under-fed in our design. In the case of batik for example, how many discouraging, worthless—yes, harmful things appeared under this name—on every side we hear, "Ah yes, a genuine batik." And many a questioning soul timidly looking on for a chance to enter into the thrilling field of art loses interest and flees.

In this day and age more than at any time, fidelity to such things as methods, processes, devices, as such is decidedly secondary, yet we are interested in a way to release

what is within us. The more mediums we have at our command the happier we are. No artist was hurt by actually having his say in batik, or block print or anything else. The great trouble is and always will be very likely that we insist on placing too much interest on the process, focusing all our attention on the means rather than developing something worth saying. Too many feel that the moment they master a process they have arrived. They have gone but part way and unquestionably the easiest part. The harm comes to the student or beginner who allows his creative faculties to be stultified by the mere mechanical steps in a process. Having learned how to go through the performance it often does little more than make a puppet of him and produce an out-put equally lifeless. On the other hand for the person vibrant with creative force and always ready to meet new problems of design involving new materials and eager to compose within new limitations there is much in store for him in the tempera color process. Here we have a quickly responsive medium limitless in its possibilities with flexibility enough for anyone yet with the adequate amount of individual differences to give it character.

Just where this way of working came from is still a

puzzle—but it is such a pleasure to be able to share with the readers of DESIGN some of our experiences at Ohio State University as we started to explore. As you see from the reproduction of one of Miss Genthner's design (See Supplement) there are some ways in which it resembles batik. In fact some have called it "paper batik" for it is a resist process. Also you can see in other designs that it is similar to block prints; a close relative certainly in the way it produces a richness of black with planes of varying textures and edges, full of personality. Again in some places it has been called "imitation wood block print." But that hardly

which comes in jars is adequate. First let us start with one color; let us say green. To a small amount of green, perhaps a teaspoonful, add a little white tempera and a little regular old-fashioned mucilage, not library paste nor glue, for they will not answer the purpose in this case. This mixture is to be stirred thoroughly. Right here it is necessary to remind persons working with tempera that the color itself must without exception, be thoroughly stirred and not only at the top but down to the bottom of the container. This is necessary to mix the various ingredients which have a tendency to separate. Furthermore tempera



seems reasonable for it does not need to imitate that technique at all, though in some cases it is possible to imitate it almost perfectly. Resist process was mentioned above; by that is meant a process like batik, for example, in which the design is produced by resisting something which gives light and dark value relationships. Photography works this way, the dark places on the negative resist the dark on the finishing paper in certain places in such a manner as to give us a result with light and dark places. In this process, in which tempera paint (show-card colors) and India ink are used on paper, the tempera paint is so mixed as to resist the India ink just as wax resists the dark colored dye in batik.

Now to be explicit it seems best to describe the whole process in detail from the beginning. To start with it is well to think of materials. Manilla drawing paper of the public school variety is satisfactory to work on while charcoal paper gives a desirable texture and water color paper gives still another. It is well to try several. The tempera

when in the right condition to use is of the consistency of thin cream. Now to this teaspoonful of green tempera well stirred and of the consistency of thin cream add about one-eighth teaspoonful each of white tempera and mucilage. The mixing of these is what causes the ink to be resisted later.

When starting the design it is well to have it worked out in pencil outline with the dark values and light values well visualized. Here is where the beginner or art student acquires excellent experience in pre-vision—seeing the finished product in his imagination. The light values are those to be painted in with this mixture described above and in doing this the paint must be laid on freely and not too thin. After all the light areas are covered and dry it is time to apply the black India ink. This should be painted on freely with a large brush over the entire surface so that the paper looks completely black. This is the most exciting part of the whole thing for as soon as the ink is dry it may be given the next part of the process. At this stage it is to



5. Immerse it in water moving it gently until the black ink has washed away satisfactorily.
6. Allow the paper to dry on a flat surface.

be immersed in a basin or sink partly filled with water and it is rather important to wet the entire paper at the same time to avoid any uneven places. After moving it back and forth in the water the black under which there is tempera paint gradually gives way and discloses the color beneath it—green in this case. But the places on the paper which have only black without the tempera underneath remain black. The completeness with which the black is removed varies in different cases. A little experimenting will reveal numerous effects in brush strokes in textures in edges and in washing off black. Some designs very suitably may call for a rather free seemingly careless washing off process while others may be rigidly, minutely cleaned of black.

For beginners a little study of block prints of the coarser variety will help them think of pleasing planes and textures. Variety in values as in block prints may be produced in making lined surfaces and finely patterned areas of all kinds. It is interesting to realize the possibilities of getting a rich color effect with many different colors, yet here there is danger of producing lack of unity.

It may be well to briefly enumerate the steps:

1. Have a design worked out in pencil outline—a landscape or flower group is satisfactory.
2. Mix some tempera paint, any color, with white tempera and mucilage to the proportion of eight parts colored tempera, one part white and one part mucilage.
3. Paint this on the areas of the design which are to be light and allow it to dry thoroughly.
4. Cover the entire surface of design with India ink and allow it to dry.





The various illustrations shown with this article were taken from Mr. Payant's class in design this summer at Ohio State University and suggest a wide range of possibilities with Tempera Color Process.



The Annunciation,—the influence of the Fifteenth Century painters is seen in the highly florid creations of the Giovanni della Robbia School.

GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA

(1469-1527)

Photographs by Alinari, Florence, Italy

Ralph Fanning

GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA is the only one of the third generation of the famous family to occupy a notable place in Florentine Art. Andrea, his father, had seven sons, four of whom, at least, worked with him. Two of the family entered the monastery of San Marco influenced by the great reformer Savonarola. Another, named after his grandfather, confined his energies almost entirely to industrial decoration. Still another son, Gerolamo, born in 1488, we follow to France where he becomes wealthy by designing the terra cotta for the Chateau de Madrid. So it is Giovanni who remains in the Florentine atelier to carry on the family traditions.

The work which seems best to connect Giovanni's art with that of his father Andrea and his great uncle Luca, is the Lavabo of the sacristy of Santa Maria Novella, a work that has already been mentioned in connection with the work of Luca. If M. de Foville is correct in dating this work in 1497, its erection would have been twelve years after Luca's death or when Giovanni was thirteen years of age. Though we can hardly think of so fine a work being executed by such a youngster, it is not presuming too much to believe that the great uncle may have had a great influence upon the representative of the third generation of della Robbia work. During the last years of the 15th century there is greater difficulty in ascribing definite authorship because of the collaboration that was evidently going on in the prolific production and reproduction of the ceramic workshop.

Technically the work of Giovanni della Robbia and his associates and followers achieves marked accomplishments. The introduction of a greater number of colors was accompanied by a greater variety of forms. Brilliance of coloring and sensitive modeling are not always companions as con-

trol of color provides an easier and so a cheaper means of effect. Technical facility does not always produce the greatest art as it leads away from simplicity and by its very cleverness is often productive of confusion. In the case of glazed ceramic work, the dexterity of the craft may well call forth a just admiration and so comes an appreciation and enjoyment of much of the work that can be attributed to Giovanni.

Examples of the third style of della Robbia ware are the two Florentine rondos here illustrated. Both owe much of their sumptuous charm to the wreaths of luxurious foliage and fruit which seem symbolic of the wealth of the High Renaissance. The markets and gardens of Florence were pillaged for the models. So realistically were the forms modeled and colored that there is no difficulty in recognizing the species of fruit and flora. The apples and oranges, pomegranates, pears and clusters of grapes are woven in with gourds and cucumbers, accented by roses, daisies and lilies. Glossy green leaves of laurel and grape serve as a harmonizing union of both line and color. The heavy glaze produces a play of liquid highlights over the whole as of sparkling dew in the fresh morning light. So fascinating is the rich enframement that the subject enframement must necessarily take second place.

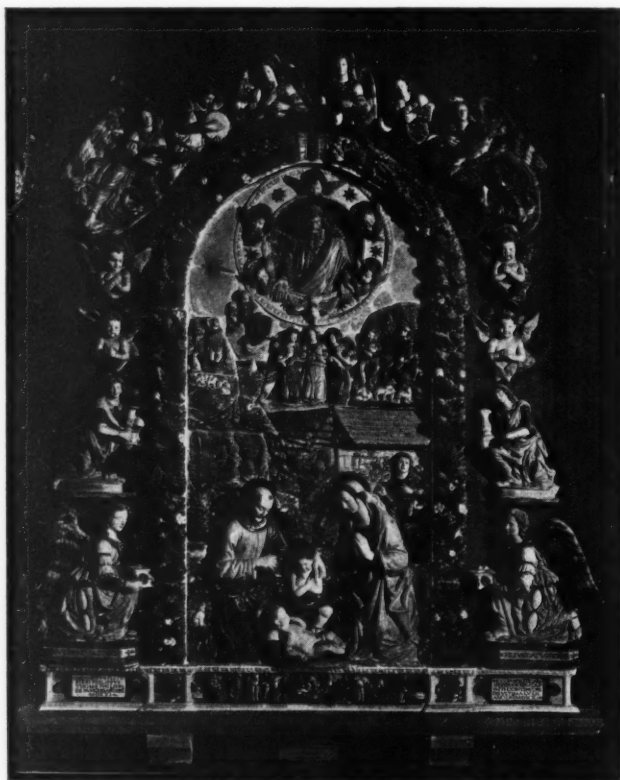
In the Adoration scene (page 86) the appearance of patch work makes the work inferior artistically to much of the less elaborate earlier work. The two angels bearing lily branches and crowns are in the spirit of the border with their fluttering colored draperies. Their proportions lack the sure sense of the earlier masters and they tend to overpower the kneeling Virgin and restless Child which might well be the work of some other craftsman who is copying from casts left in the studio from older com-

mission. The rondo on page 87 has greater consistency of scale. The circle of white egg and darts distinguishes the flowers from the central form, emphasizing the beauty of both. The modeling of the Madonna and Child relates them to Andrea's creations but it is evident that the direct inspiration that prompted the sentiment loving Andrea is substituted by a certain lack of feeling that probably came with the greater craft skill and mass production.

The ceramic portrait statue of St. Dominic in its glazed niche with heavy garlands is believed to have been the unassisted work of Giovanni who chose this manner of glorifying the great monastic founder while his brothers were themselves taking the black and white robes of the Dominican order. Compared with his father's rendering of St. Dominic in the meeting with St. Francis in the tympanum of San Paolo, Giovanni's work seems somewhat insincere and theatrical. The elaborate treatment of semi-detached garlands, cupids and crowning vase of flowers on the top of the arch overpowers the composition. The repetition of the garland, the unstable attitudes of the discrepancy of scale in the surmounting decoration all combine to make it an inferior artistic accomplishment for the della Robbia shop. Compared with the very similar motif used in the aforementioned Lavabo of Santa Maria Novella, one senses the lack of the restraining sculptural influence of the father and more especially the great uncle. One is further inclined to credit Giovanni with the introduction of the enameled landscape in the tympanum of the Lavabo, although Vasari has given Luca the credit of inventing the process of making pictures in enamels—credit that may have an artistic question mark for all who respect the medium of terra cotta. That Giovanni was still influenced by the famed sculptors of his father's generation is seen in



Adoration Group with Angels. School of Andrea della Robbia



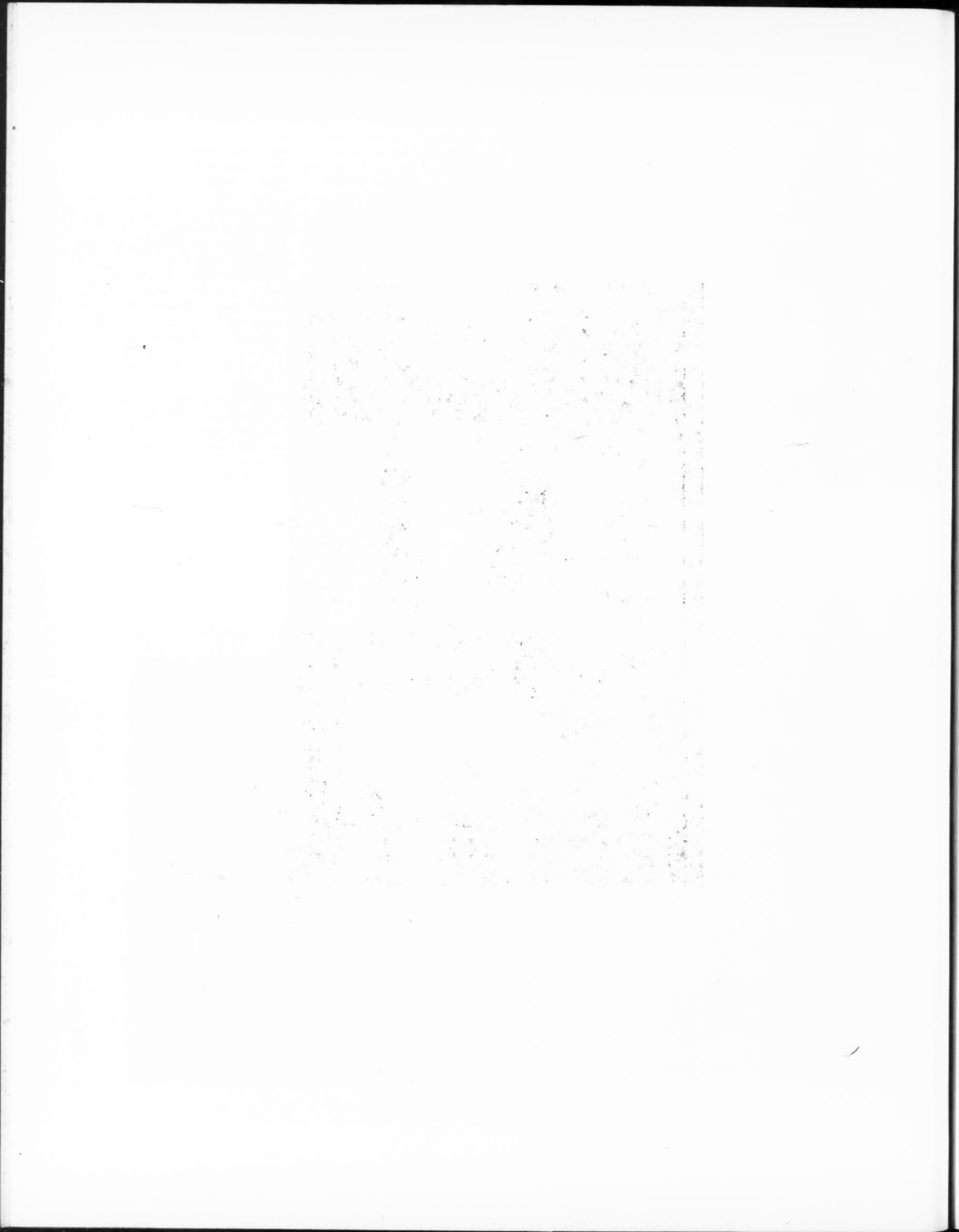
The Nativity, an Altar-piece by Giovanni della Robbia, National Museum, in Florence



St. Dominic by Giovanni della Robbia. In the garlands and putti is seen the influence of the sculptor Desiderio da Settignano



DECORATIVE PANEL—EUNICE GENTHNER
(DONE IN THE TEMPERA COLOR PROCESS)





Madonna and Child. School of Giovanni della Robbia. The circle of white egg and darts distinguishes the flowers from the central form emphasizing the beauty of both



Madonna della Misericordia by Giovanni della Robbia

the imitation of the garlands and putti used by Desiderio da Settignano. There is also a decidedly sculptural character in the Madonna della Misericordia. Here a clever handling of figures in perspective succeeds in filling in the background area with low relief portraits of the kneeling members of the donor's family.

Generally speaking it is from the realm of painting rather than that of sculpture that the great inspiration comes to the della Robbia atelier of the time of Giovanni. Such an inspiration would necessarily have grave dangers for workers in a plastic medium. The beautiful Annunciation (page 85) is but another of the numerous renderings of this popular subject that has appeared on the canvasses and panels of all the great masters of fifteenth century Florence. Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Ghirlandajo, Leonardo da Vinci, Filippino Lippi and many others gave notable examples of the popular theme to inspire the ceramic workers with pictorial bent. The conventional composition of the kneeling angel appearing before the seated Virgin had become almost a formula, but was specially suited to the semi-circular areas of the popular tympanum compositions. The emphasis placed upon the vase and lilies harmonized with the floral enframement.

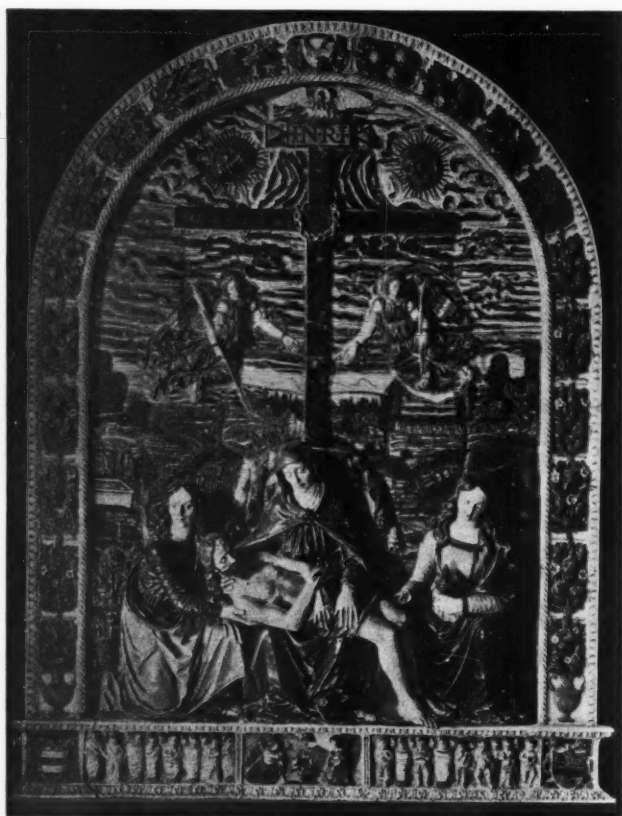
Even more of the pictorial quality is seen in the ambitious Altar-piece in the National Museum of Florence (page 86). Here there is crowded into the central panel all the traditional characters of the Nativity with an abundance of incidental stage setting—stable, forest and fields—shepherds, saints and angels—with God, the Father, looking down from above through a sort of porthole of heaven. Detached angel musicians, gift bearers and a cherub chorus are symmetrically arranged about the whole outside of the



Deposition from the Cross, by Giovanni della Robbia. National Museum in Florence.

upgrowing garland whose enameled forms are more effective in this rigid arrangement than as petrified festoons. The extreme realism which Giovanni and his followers endeavored to achieve is well represented by the small reliefs at the base of the tablet, which again are in imitation of the numerous painted altarpieces. This miniature is suggestive of the realism of the more ambitious work in the "Deeds of Mercy" frieze in the Hospital of Ceppo at Pistoia, considered by de Forille as the most original work of Giovanni. In the composition of this work is to be found

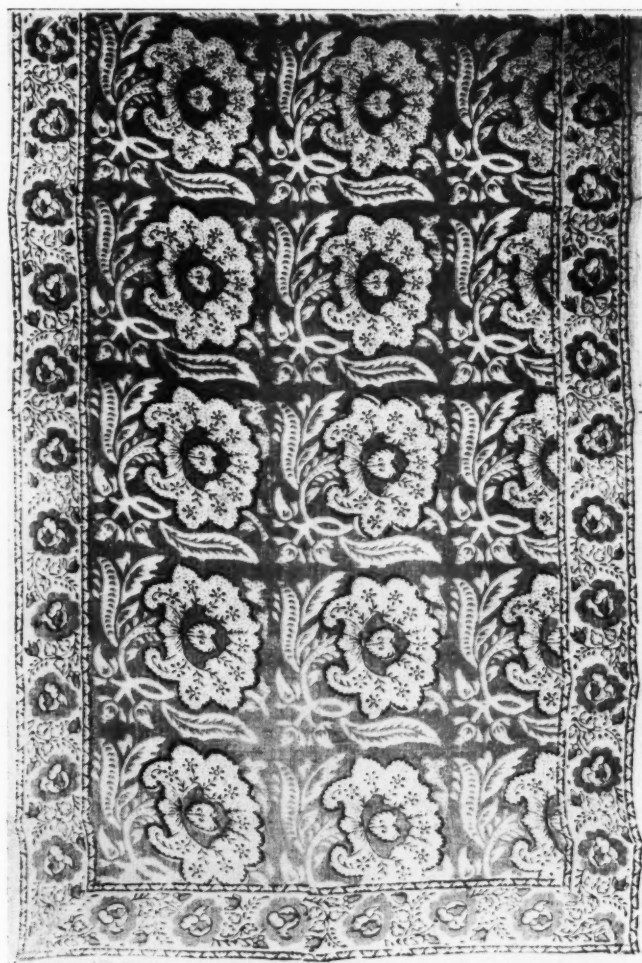
many possibilities of polychromic, is a combination of pictorial and sculptural arts, but its greater merit seems, from a study of the della Robbias, to be when it has followed the plastic traditions of great sculpture. This does not mean that, rightly considered, it is a substitute for marble or bronze, but has a material merit all its own. In bas-reliefs, the possibilities of plastic coloration independent of shadows which are fickle upon highly glazed surfaces, would seem to take the della Robbia work from the field of sculpture, but it is surely the work of Luca, the recognized



Deposition from the Cross in the Montedaglio Chapel at Verna. School of Giovanni della Robbia.

numerous figures copied from paintings, but so freely adopted, if not adapted to the ceramic work that they have a charm quite their own. There is to be seen in these realistic scenes, figures copied from Verrocchio, Botticelli and della Porta (Fra Bartolomeo), altered and readjusted to serve the needs. In the two very similar "Deposition from the Cross" at Verna, and in the National Museum in Florence there is an equal regard for pictorial precedent. The National Gallery piece has the surrounding group placed against a restless background where the attempted reproduction of landscape and clouds claims the larger part of the area.

If one may be so Victorian as to try to read a moral from the work of the della Robbias through the 15th and 16th centuries, there are plenty of lessons noted by the ceramic designer. First there is the warning to the technician not to let his sheer cleverness in manipulating materials endanger the simple, sincere and direct art. Cleverness and dexterity are always admirable as long as such are the servants and not the masters of the art. Second and more specifically, enameled terra cotta, utilizing the



Indian Block-print on Silk. Red and Black on Orange Background.

sculptor, that has the highest claim for artistic attainment. Perhaps, it is the personalities of the artists that are accountable, but the work does not improve when the younger generations pursue the pictorial. The one exception is in the realm of lavish decoration where, in the later work, the architectural and floral ornamentation take on a richness and splendor that reflects the full blossoming of the flower of Renaissance decoration. This is perhaps the high calling of enameled terra cotta such as the della Robbia wrought to add the jeweled bits of shining color to an age which after all was but emerging into the new light of artistic reawakening. Surely the Renaissance period, like all subsequent times, would have been the drabber without the contribution of the three generations of productive work connected with the honored names of Luca, Andrea and Giovanni della Robbia.



Indian block-print on cotton. Dull red and black on yellow.



A Japanese silk kerchief for wrapping parcels. A beautiful treatment of birds and flowers.

EASTERN CRAFTS FROM A DESIGNER'S VIEWPOINT

SILKS AND COTTONS

Floy K. Hanson

EVERY strong impression is grist to a designer's mill. This fact is so obvious, both in the West and in the East, that comment seems quite unnecessary. American textile designers make sound and charming patterns from social functions, city sky-lines, and automobiles, as readily as our skillful Japanese neighbors delight their public with motifs from temple court-yards, rice patterns, and Happiness Boats steered by the Seven Lucky Gods. Recently in Kyoto a shopkeeper showed me a *ferushika*—piece of silk or cotton cloth used for wrapping parcels—quaintly decorated in one corner with a lace-like pattern of ingeniously arranged skeletons. So restrained were the gray tones and so rhythmic were the graceful figures, that the artist had succeeded in re-telling, without even a hint of gruesomeness, a favorite old story of Japanese robbers whose symbol was a skeleton.

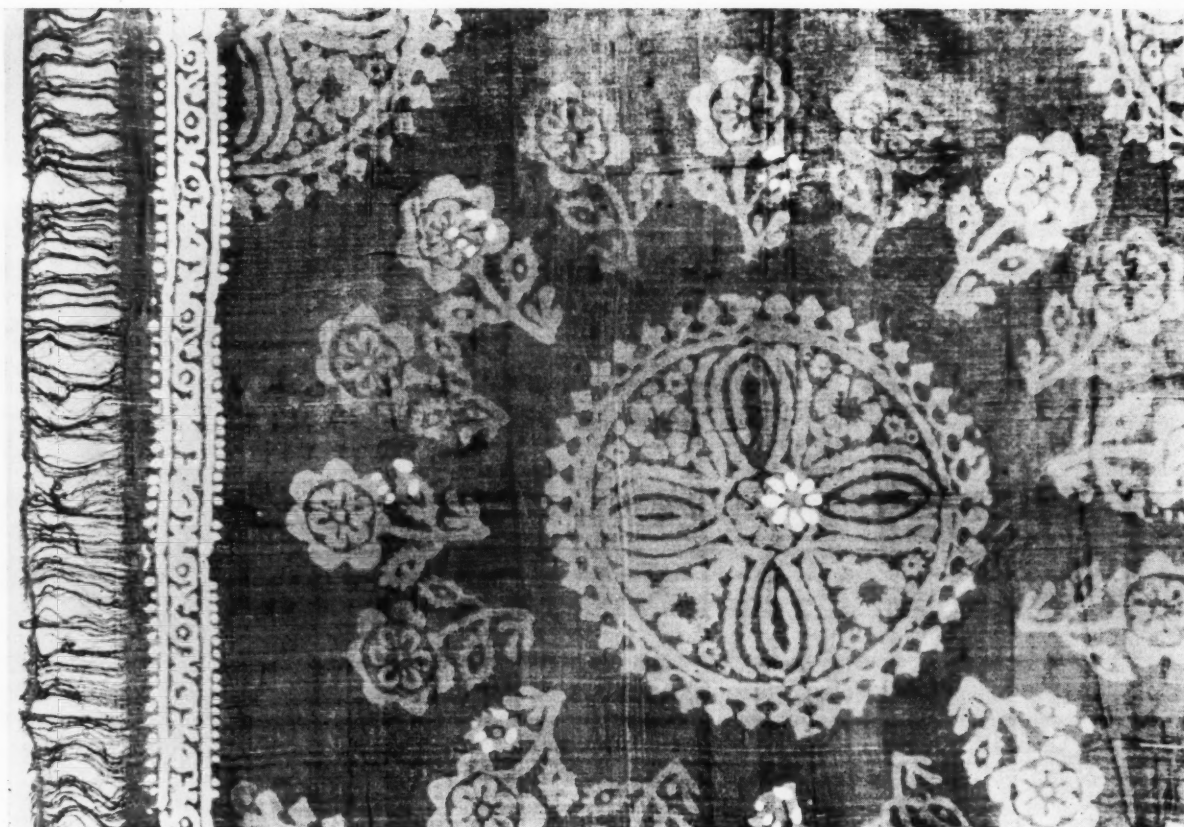
Again and again while traveling in the East one marvels at the daring of the oriental designer. He is able to make artistic arrangements of any subject because of his knowledge that good spacing, tone, and color are more important tools than subject-matter. He plays with his material and motif as a musician makes use of his instrument and theme to express his emotions. In pottery, wood, cloth, lacquer, and metal, the artist develops his idea according to his need. With astonishing power he animates his chosen medium of expression, repeating in endless variation such familiar subjects as wave, cloud, flower, figure, symbolic thought,—the very essence of idea, shorn of all entangling non-essentials. Knowing both the limitations and also the flexibility of his tools, the craftsman plays on them with artistic certainty. His good taste, born of a studious and beautiful self-expression, dictates the use of this cloud form for pottery, that variation of the cloud for wood-carving, still another modification of the same subject for the loom. And always there is an amazing spontaneity and fitness in these age-old ideas repeated in everchanging variations.

Memory training is an essential force in the growth of a fine designer. In the East much encouragement is given to fostering the note book habit. In Japan the parks and "flower-viewing places" are haunted by students carrying their ink-pots and small sketchbooks. It is delightful to watch their absorption in the study of a lotus, a flowering branch, perhaps a group of merry-makers. The student may deliberate for a long time, studying his subject from many angles before using his brush. Then suddenly, when his ideas are well clarified, he will fix with a few swift strokes, an impression indelible in his memory as well as in his notebook. From such well-stored minds, poetic and disciplined, these artists can select according to their requirements. Their finely trained memories, keen from daily service, function as unhesitatingly as a musician's keyboard responds to his practiced fingers.

An Eastern artist draws constantly on his subconscious art world, that rich store-house of his own building. From a fusion of his material and spiritual experiences he is able to re-create masterful ideas, freed from the accidental and transient aspects of life that too often befog less thoughtful minds. Such tireless and intelligent workers as Hokusai, and Hiroshige filled an incredible number of note books as did many other artists of wood-block print fame. It is said of such men, as it was said of the great Raphael, that they could summon Nature at will, without the aid of models, so familiar were they with the essentials of form and color. Akbar, that great Moghul ruler and art patron, expressed the designer's viewpoint more than three hundred years ago when he said: "The reality of things exists in the mind, not in the details of their appearance to the eye." How many painful trials at "decoration" would be spared to the world, if we, who call ourselves designers, would think of realities instead of details.

One more word about the designer's life. A real designer, an originator, must have knowledge and vision. He must

A Turkish Textile Design on thin silk gauze. Blocked with a "resist" against a rich brown-black ground. Three simple blocks are spaced in two colors and white. The beauty in this piece is largely due to unusual spacing and color.



be acquainted with the past, have a glimpse of the future. Every great designer—painter, builder, craftsman—has been a genuine modern. He has not been afraid to tell the story of his own people in his own language. Artistic appreciation of his own community, of his own homeland, may finally expand to an inclusion of other nations, and at last his catholic taste may feel no restraint of national boundary. But first, before he seeks foreign worlds to conquer, the artist must hear in the needs of his own civilization a challenge to create. He may answer with steel and concrete, with clay and wood, with silk and cotton, with glass and metal—in whatever material stirs him most. At first, for him the past is merely a reference background, an aid in solving his contribution to the life of his own day. No wealth of the past can serve him who is not thoroughly alive, yes throbbing in sympathy with the activities of his own environment. Which brings us to a consideration of these simple but beautiful examples of Eastern fabrics, whose makers undoubtedly felt the stir of their native land. The study of their easy spacing, their restful pattern, their vibrant color, compel admiration for the effective way in which an idea has been suitably expressed. Someone has pointed out that an Eastern craftsman can set up shop anywhere, so few are his tools, so great his knowledge. One feels just that in these unaffected textiles—minimum of effort, maximum of effect. No fumbling with block, dye-pot, or needle. Every move contributes to a dignified and interesting result.

How can such an end be achieved? The answer is: No fumbling. From a designer's standpoint, successful planning of a simple kerchief is begun in exactly the same way as an architect plans his building. The mental processes are the same in both instances, allowance being made

of course, for the difference in detail and complexity. Both designers must know their tools; both must consider purpose and fitness of materials; both must estimate size, proportion, color, quality; both must choose spaces and motifs for decoration. All of these considerations, when finally worked out will stamp both the kerchief and the building either as a thing of beauty, or as another piece of ugly commercialism. And so we see that the successful craftsman leaves nothing to chance. Before his work is begun he has a vivid mental image of the finished project. Very naturally, those whose visual powers are strongly developed will produce finer results, granting equal ability in expression, than will those whose images are blurred and only half formed. Suppose we follow three designers through their successive steps of production as indicated by evidence in the illustrations accompanying this article. Selecting the ferushika on page 91 is easy to believe that the ruling thought in the artist's mind was to make a small, almost square, and rather pale parcel wrapper for an elderly person. Rich and heavy crepe material was chosen, and in harmony with the idea of dignity, a semi-religious subject was selected, showing one of the Seven Lucky Gods. Quite naturally, the symbols of that god,—the sacred deer and white crane—were introduced into the pattern. And what a happy choice of spacing. Three congenial figures in a circle—emblem of eternity and unity—knowingly placed on a rectangular cloth. See how delightfully the figure of first importance has been framed into a symmetrical and entirely natural arrangement of bird and animal. How the white crane with its dark accents on one side, and the dark deer with its light accents on the other, play into the close middle tones of the central figure. How the dominating gray form of the god, with his long white beard and heavy brows,



A Ferushika, a parcel wrapper designed for an elderly person; of rich heavy crepe material in harmony with the idea of dignity, using for the decoration one of the Seven Lucky Gods, the sacred deer and the white crane.

helps to weave together the circle pattern. How the rhythm of line and tone makes music for the eye in the nicely tuned masses of the suggested circle. The plain crepe border outside the circle is as surely a part of the artist's plan as the motif within it. The whole design suggests middle-aged dignity in its restrained color, in its subtle spiritual suggestion, in its quiet texture. Certainly any person of good taste would be glad to fold his small purchase into a wrapper of such charming appropriateness.

On page 90 is a gauze kerchief from Constantinople, blocked with a "resist." Against a rich brown-black ground three simple blocks are spaced in two colors and white. Obviously this designer meant to emphasize the beauty of a square cloth, which might easily have been commonplace had he not made the surface attractive both in color and also in spacing. The large rather natural flowers marching at regular intervals in slow movement around the big central rosette are saved from monotony by alternate hues of red-orange and yellow. How gracefully the little white flowers are dropped almost carelessly over the dark field to echo the white border. The uncut fringe is an interesting feature of the finely spun silk, giving lightness to the edges, and at the same time avoiding a tangle of loose ends. There is no attempt at profundity, unless one should like to think of the circle as symbolic. This is plainly an everyday inexpensive fabric intended for wear in a hot climate, and later for the tub. The sheen of its soft surface adds much to its charm. One must see the fabric to appreciate how well the designer has planned.

And finally, as we study these varied examples of oriental workmanship, let them teach us how to see and to use the life about us. At first we may be able to space beautifully just a familiar flower from our own little garden. Children often do astonishing things with color because they are unafraid. They devise symbols for butterflies, flowers, people, in surprisingly fine space relationships, adding to Nature's loveliness their own God-given invention. Try creating a new type of flower yourself basing your experiment on a vivid reaction to some beloved model. Burbank must have seen his new species always before the material form was made apparent to others about him. And when, like Hokusai's your motif has become your friend and companion in thought, so that you can draw it and space it in many positions with freedom, fix it in a moment of rapture on some pottery form, beautiful and simple in contour, so that you may feel that thrill of power that Blake thought of when he said: "To the eye of a man of imagination, Nature is Imagination itself."

♦ ♦ ♦

NOTE

Our readers will be interested in learning that while L. Reusche & Co. are still retaining their show-rooms at the usual address, 34 Union Square, New York, that all correspondence regarding supplies should be sent to the factory address, 2 to 6 Lester Ave., Newark, N. J.

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IMPORTED PORTFOLIOS OF DESIGN

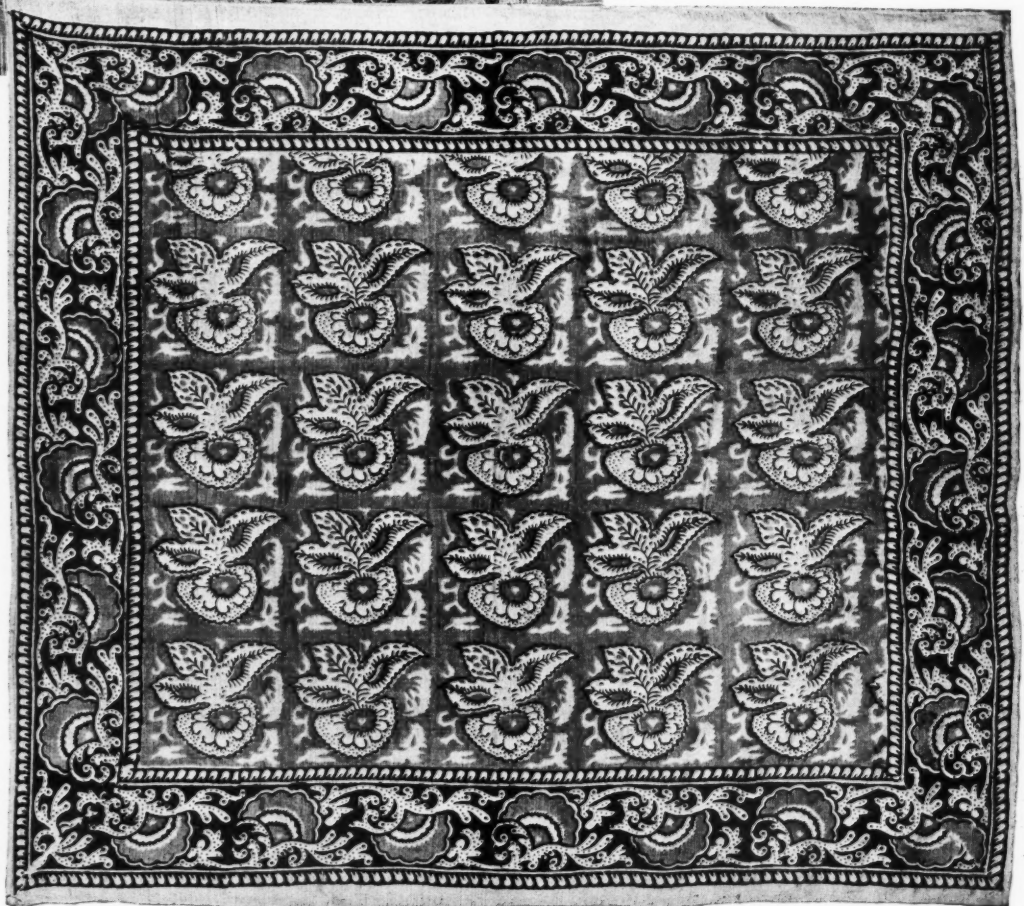
Many inquiries come to us concerning our imported French portfolios which are listed on the inside front cover of DESIGN and classified in groups as embroideries, Oriental ceramics, printed fabrics, etc. These valuable portfolios of design are accurate reproductions in color of the world's best museum pieces, each folio containing from twenty-seven to forty-eight plates mounted $10\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$ inches and from ninety-five to three hundred fourteen motifs. The color work is admirably done by a highly perfected process making the colors accurate. In each portfolio is an inexhaustible source of design material and exactly what the designer, student of art appreciation and the individual decorator needs for they bring the best museum collections to them. Teachers and supervisors of art in schools throughout the country, where art is taught for appreciation, are more in need of real fine, well chosen material for their pupils than anything else. It is futile to try to teach art from text-books and what the teacher can give alone. Every school where art is really taught must have a rich collection of material with which the student can come in direct contact. We are certain after years of experience in high schools, teachers training schools, and colleges that these imported folios are the very choicest material available. They would be an addition to any fine library.

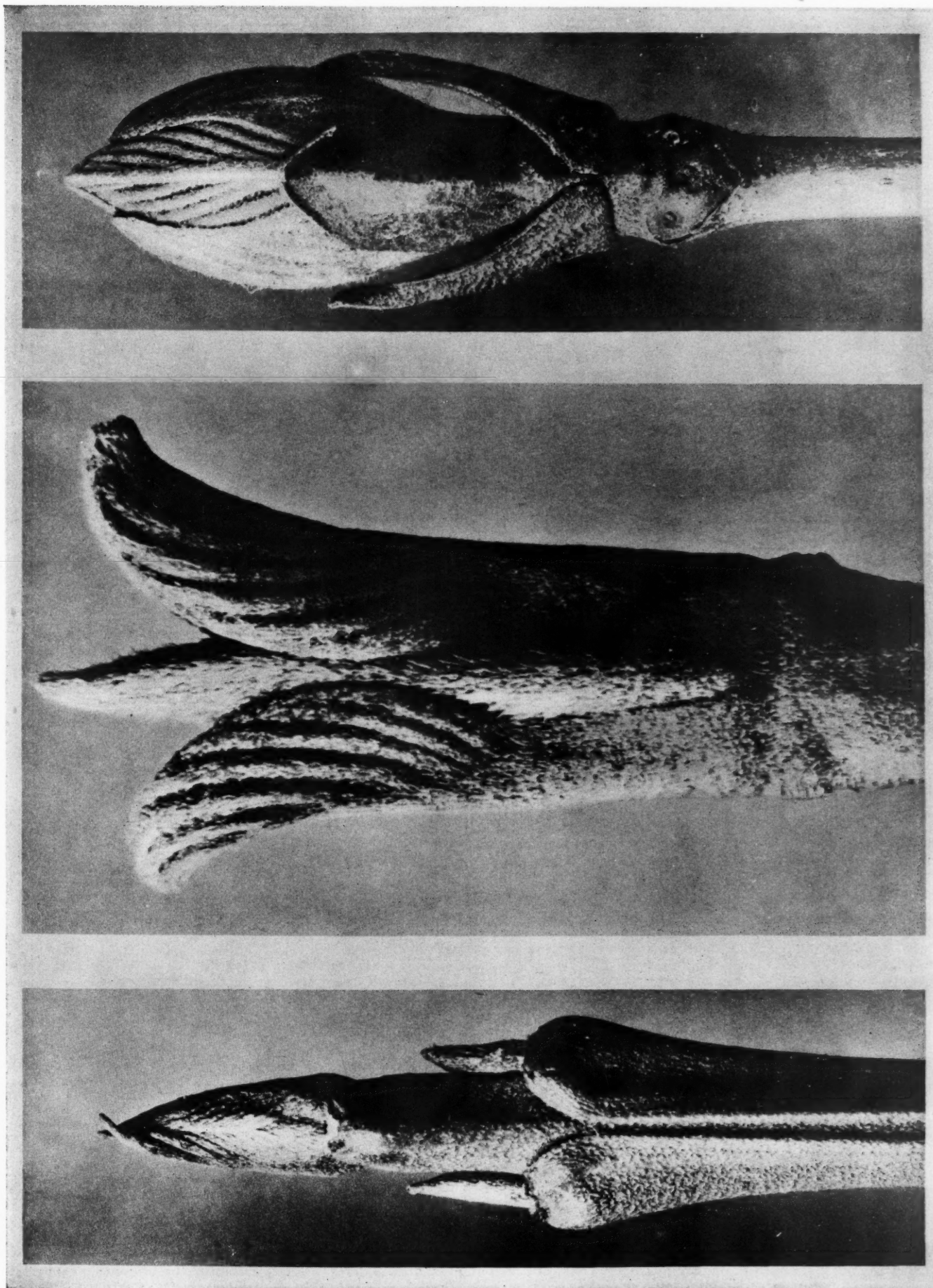


A Japanese kerchief of modern design done with a "resist" print on pongee. It was made in Kyoto and has beautiful reds and warm grays as the predominating color interest. Any designer will find a study of this piece well worth his time—the pleasing rhythmic quality of line which repeats over and over again without monotony.

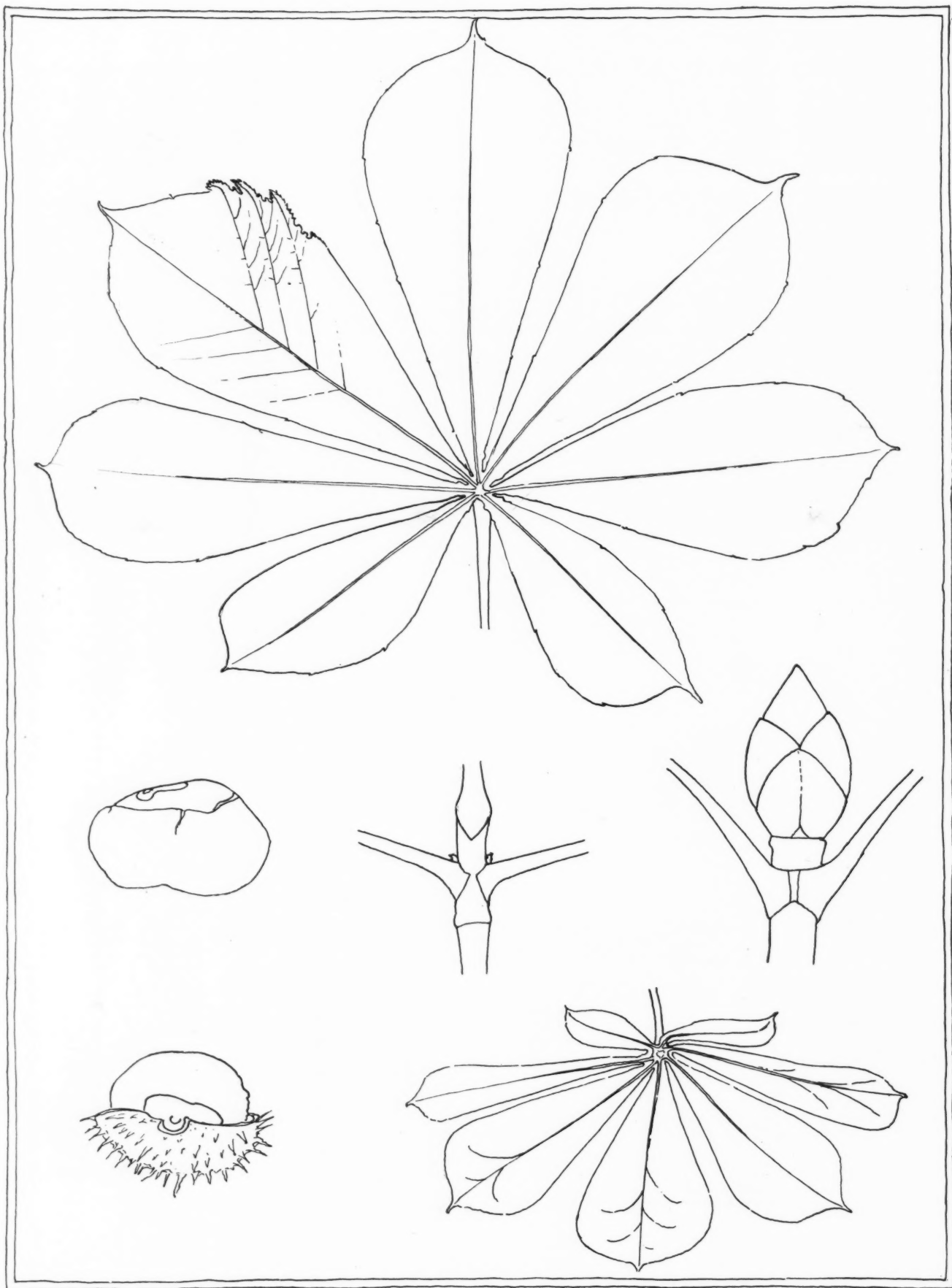
A wood block-print from old patterns and made near Calcutta, India. The colors are of very warm reds and yellows on a silk of pleasing soft texture. The delightful tone running through the piece gives a most satisfying textile quality.

The interesting narrow edge finishing the outer border is worthy of note.

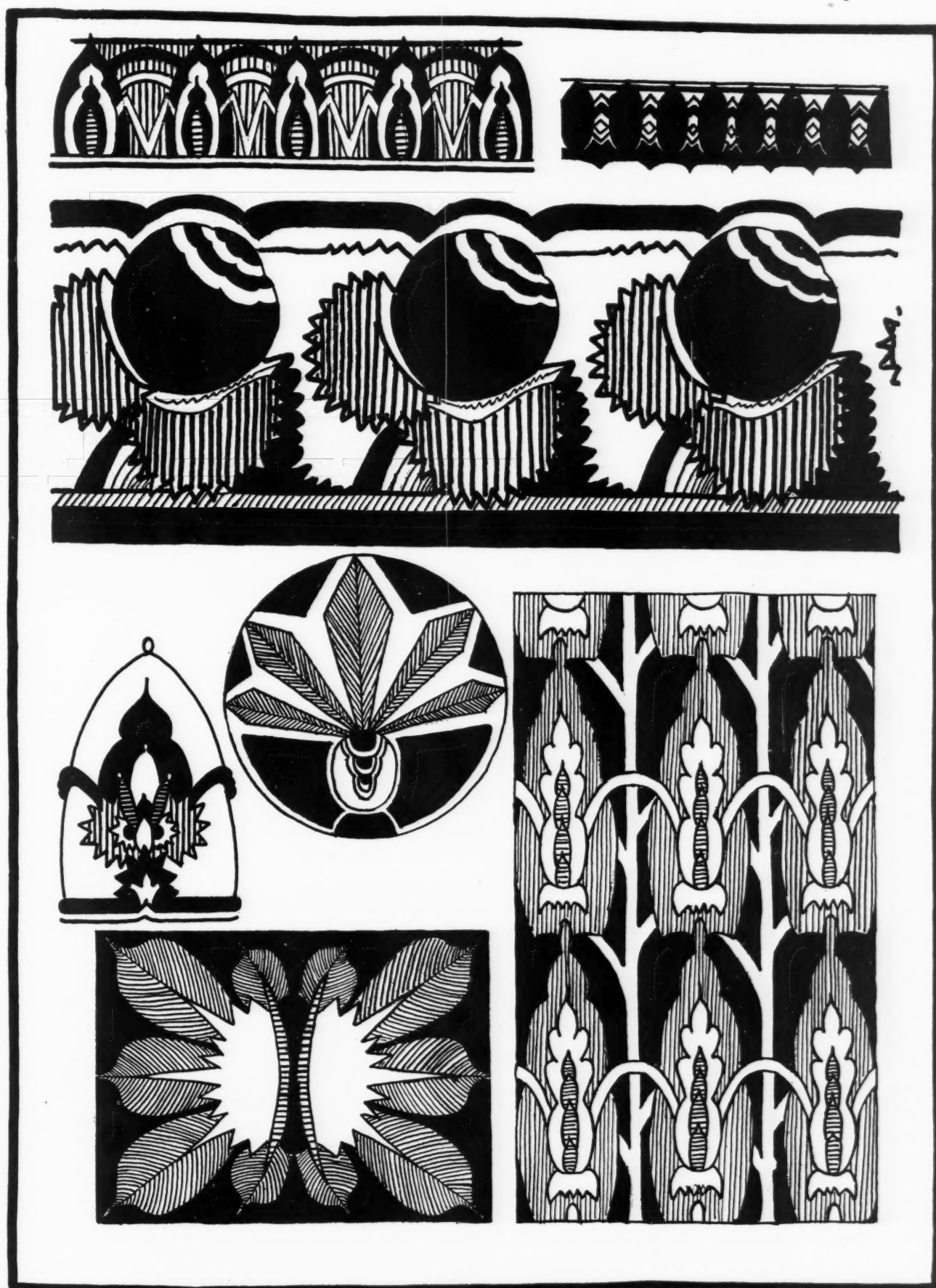




Photographs from "Urformen Der Kunst" by Karl Blossfeldt which show what the artist designer should see in Nature—the order, not the incidental.



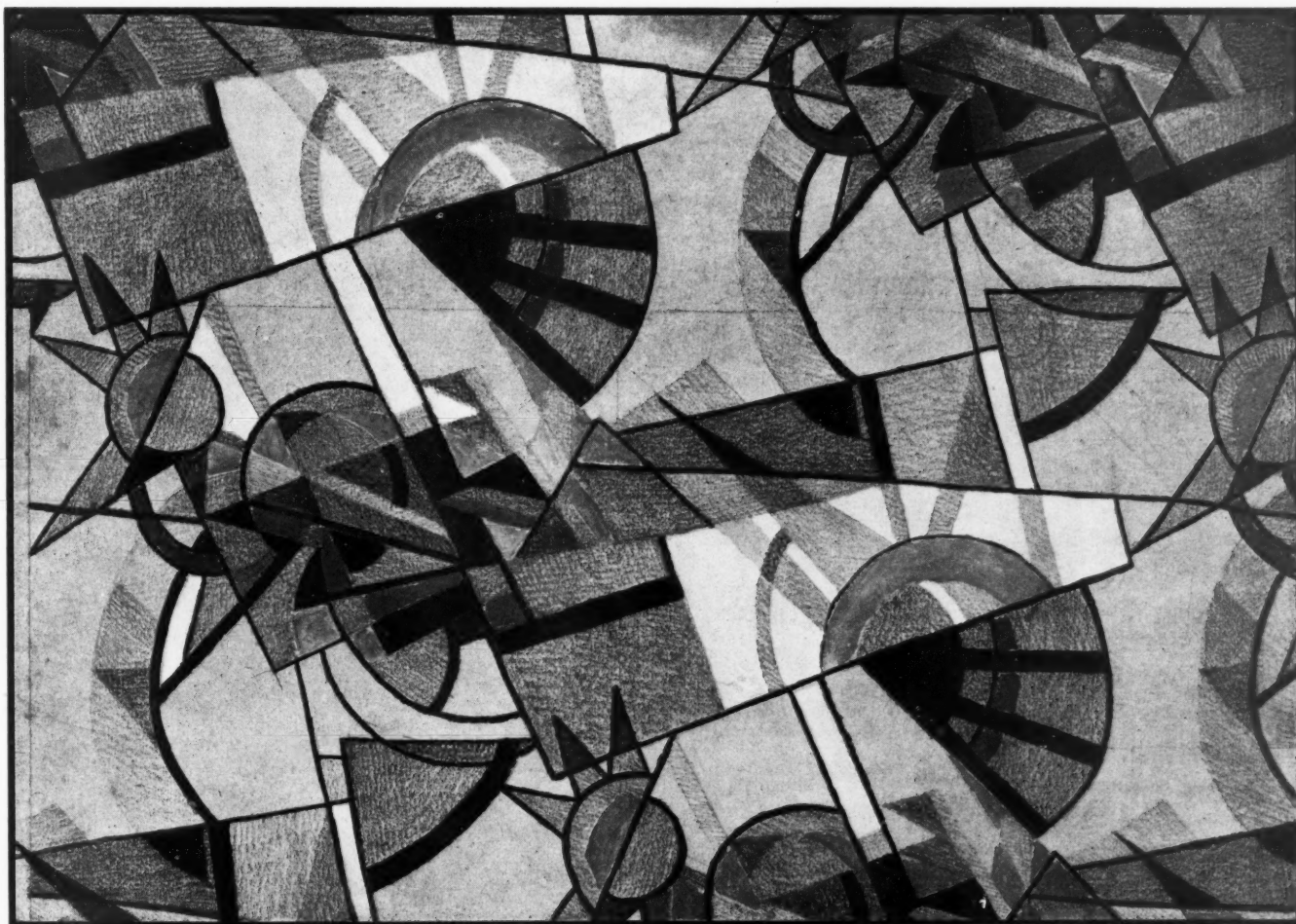
Drawings made from the buckeye or horse-chestnut, showing the same feeling for design qualities as the photographs on page 93. Such drawings serve as a basis for designs like those on the following pages.



There is no limit to the possibilities of creating designs of all kinds from plant forms once the designer appreciates order and rhythm instead of the trivial and superficial in Nature.



These designs for bowls which were carried out in copper lustre at Ohio State University were designed from Nature drawings. Besides the large outside decorative border there is a small one inside with a medallion.



A Wall Paper Design—Greens and Gold

PROFESSOR CIZEK---THE SPIRIT OF HIS WORK WITH HIS JUVENILE AND OLDER CLASSES

Bertha Lange

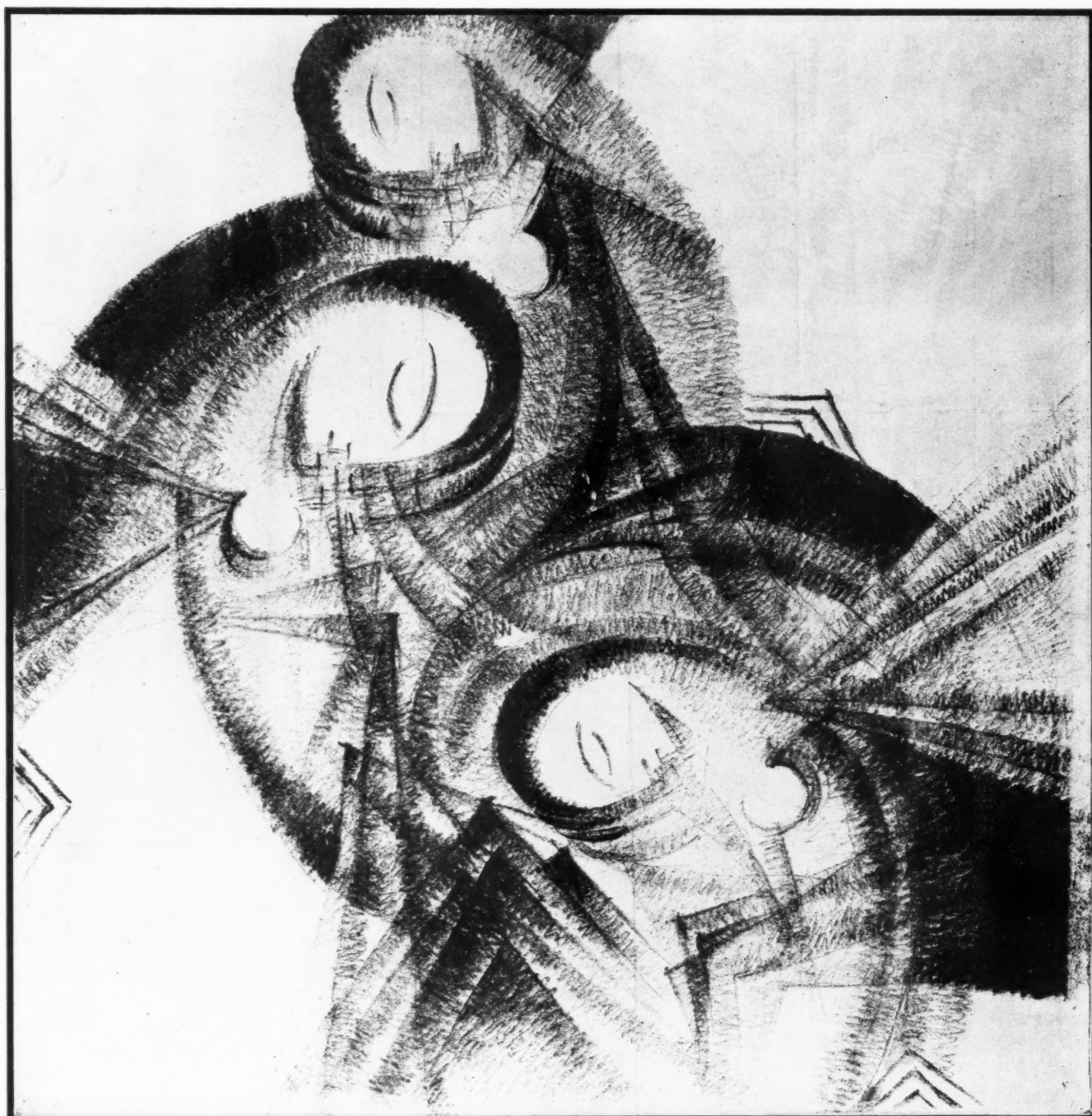
TO my remark, "But you do guide the pupils, Herr Professor," Professor Cizek, distinctive, aristocratic, with an almost-always-present smile of wisdom loitering about his eyes, replied: "No, I do not think of it in that way. My thought is simply to brush everything aside and give the child a chance to exist, to come to himself, to grow, in an environment advantageous to his doing so." And then followed his three main ideas: 1. *Werden lassen*; 2. *Wachsen lassen*; 3. *Sich vollenden lassen*. A little difficult to translate, it may be that some of the German readers of DESIGN can put them into better words for themselves. The ones I choose, to best convey the spirit of Professor Cizek's ideas, are: 1. To permit the child to "be" (just its own little entity); 2. To allow the child to develop; 3. To permit the child to fulfill itself.

And, now, the environment into which Professor Cizek puts the child: A long room with windows at one side, about six windows; rows of graduated very much worn desks and benches, a raised platform at one end, behind which is a blackboard. Into the windows, during the winter months, comes a dull, grayish light, but only at the windows. As soon as it reaches the room itself, and is reflected from the walls, it changes into the brightest, the gayest of reds and purple and orange, reflections from the gay and charming pictures which cover the walls, stand about on easels,

are piled one in front of the other against the walls, on the floors; and from the unbelievably brilliant, jewel-like embroideries, which from time to time are tacked on the blackboard, and the alluring joyful toys which stand on the table, on the platform. This is the physical environment or milieu of Professor Cizek's classes.

The spiritual atmosphere which pervades his classes is a little more difficult to define, and infinitely more telling. As one of his fellow professors said to me just before I entered his classes, "If you are going to study with Professor Cizek, you are going into a holy atmosphere." Holy it is, quite above, beyond earthly existence, but always there is a strong connection with everyday life. Professor Cizek is a great artist, an outstanding master, and a very practical man. In art he feels the pulse, the connection with our everyday living; indeed, he feels that art is an expression of our day to day living. I do not know how well known are his classes of older pupils, seventeen years and older, to whom for many years he has been expounding his theories of modern design, and by whom some of the finest applications of Modern Art to ceramics, textiles, wood carvings, intarsia, weaving, embroideries, enamels, metal work, laces, furniture, toys, glass windows, posters, etc., have been made.

Professor Cizek's juvenile class, children from five to fourteen years old, is more widely known. We will take a



A beautiful abstract treatment of figures in charcoal with quite an unusual treatment, done by an older pupil of Dr. Cizek.

look there first. I remember visiting the juvenile class one day when the idea to be expressed was an auto delivery wagon or a motorcycle, well manned and loaded with goods for delivery. After a few brief words, the work began, accompanied by a steady buzz from the little ones. "Here I put the wheel, there sits the man." For Professor Cizek likes to have the children tell the story of the picture, while they are drawing it. It was interesting and expressive of Vienna, that all this went on like a little melody, rather than an incoherent babble. But the Professor is not dictatorial about the subject chosen. The child coming to draw, quite filled with what he loves and wishes to express, is encouraged to draw that, rather than a given idea. I remember one little fellow, eight years old, so tiny he had to stand on a box to reach his canvas, and whom every current event

meant a vivid picture. One day he was working on a canvas, really enormous for his size, showing in minute detail a large parade with scores of tiny figures in each division with bands, and banners and placards, the background, the Hofburg and other buildings and the gardens of the former Imperial Court; in the foreground small street wagons labeled "Eis" (Viennese Ice Cream), pedestrians, perambulators and dogs, lining the sidewalks of The Ring. Another time the same young artist very stirringly depicted the sinking of an Italian passenger steamship, Princess Mafalda. Dozens of passengers sliding down rope ladders to life boats and bobbing about in the waves, and the great ship, slowly, tragically, succumbing to a stormy sea. He always drew crowds and chose his subjects from the news of the day.



Next to him stood a black-eyed, rosy-cheeked little girl drawing quite perfectly the prettiest little lambs I have ever seen, in a garden filled to profusion with many varied colored flowers.

In the classroom there is also a lovely old music-box, which plays half a dozen tinkling tunes and a very good phonograph with some well chosen records. Among them quite a few American jazz records which the Professor and the children, alike, delight in. Professor Cizek likes the tempo, the rhythm, the musical construction of present-day American music and wants its inspiration and impulse for his pupils. A record which was always greeted with shrieks of joy was one which, from out of a jumble of cross rhythms, shouts: "Any Ice Lady?" I do not know how many of the pupils understood it, but they loved its speed, its go, its roaring primitiveness.

The children not only draw, but work in all craft mediums and Professor Cizek aims constantly to have a good design instantly converted into materials. And he tries, too, to bring something creative to the technique. Just as I was leaving the school, the children were beginning to work in enamels. Not the usual technique, but much more in the manner of very early, primitive enamels. I remember two pieces: One a small plaque showing a village square with small houses, tiny streets and adorable details in the shape of little yellow chickens; the other a bracelet made of separate, enameled links, each link carrying a charming design in shades of blue, and each link one letter of the phrase (in English) "I love you." These were designed and made entirely by two little girls, about ten and twelve years old,—Viennese children.

If I may make comparison between the American and the Austrian child, I believe in the American child lies more

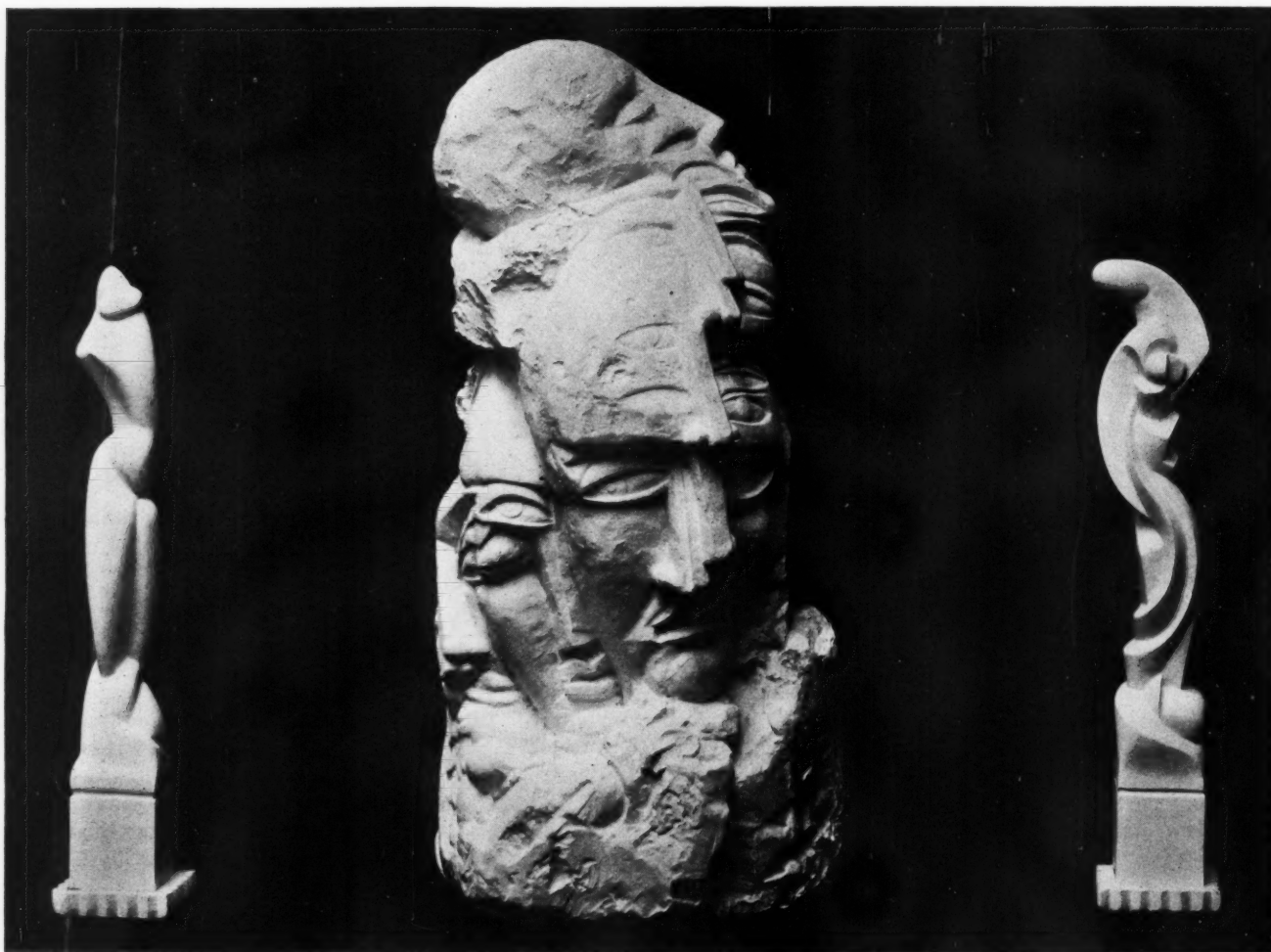


the impulse to do, but in the Austrian child, the greater joy in the doing. The Austrian child delights in and passionately loves the thing which grows under his hands and when it is in the act of being made, it seems as if his fantasy is limitless. There is always another tiny flower to be added, always another appealing detail to be filled in, and the thing under his hands grows richer and richer during the making, while the American child is eager to do, get it done, and start in on another picture. It seemed to me, too, that the European child is more conservative and produces more out of his materials. This is probably because he has fewer and has become accustomed to having less material to do with. I remember Professor Cizek speaking one day quite at length about the creative force lying within limited materials, or perhaps better said, the urge and creative result of producing within limitations.

One of the precepts of the School is "material gerecht," that is, the moral of the material: Wood put to the uses for which wood is intended or appropriate, carved into a design to suit the use to which it is to be put, and into a design which is governed by the tools which are used to carve it. And so with glass, with metal, with paper designs, ceramics, etc.

To his older pupils, Professor Cizek lectures about the modern movement in art, about the new expressions in art which have grown out of our modern life, the expression of our time. And in these lectures and the work of the older pupils, the abstract plays quite a part. His own words are: "Realism is that which one copies." "Faith is that which one believes." To amplify this, one might add *Expressionism*, that which grows from within, out. For example, the rhythms of a flower rather than a picture of the natural flower; an expression of the poetry which lies





Sculpture by older pupils of Dr. Cizek

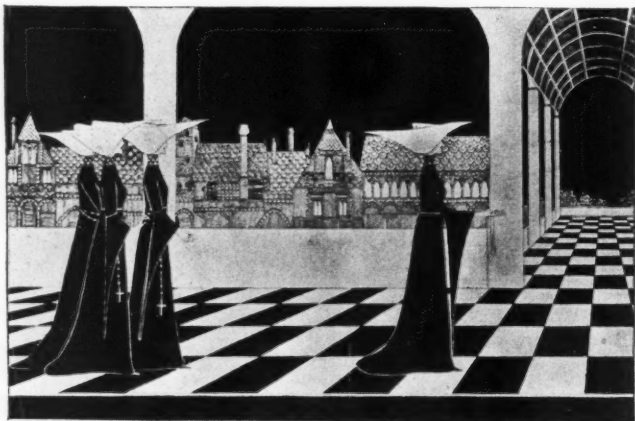
within the life of a bud. Summed up, the inner life of a flower. Outwardly, the study of the original, cosmic form made up of a combination of the eternal forms, of which the basic ones are the triangle, the circle, and the square.

To continue further, Professor Cizek's own words to his older pupils: "We must try to make every task an inner experience." And some more of his rare and wise words: "We must carry a 'fanatismus' within ourselves that burns at a steady glow and nourishes itself with its own work." "'Cubismus' is no fashion in art, it is something that has always been and will always live secretly in all artists. The art of Egypt and Babylon was cubistic. All large art epochs were cubistic, but 'cubismus' was lost when 'naturalismus' and the picture epoch set in. When art slackens,

'naturalismus' sets in. True art uses Nature as an inspiration and motive. Great artists study Nature for its structure and work along the lines of 'cubismus' and 'constructivismus'." "Art is understood only by those who have worked at it, by feeling, by experiencing." "Think a thing through to the end. After many experiences and disappointments, we can think a thing through to the end."

"There must be more inspiration, more invention, less work in art. The artist designs—improvises." "The will of the artist and the needs of the material, together build a work of art." And again and again, his words: "Man must be bold; man must be daring. What today is bold, is tomorrow a very tame and timid thing."

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A note to those interested in keeping complete files of DESIGN. The rapid increase in the subscription list during the past year makes it necessary for us to notify our readers that the October, November, December, 1928, January, February and March, 1929, issues are available only in the bound Volume 30. The number of requests received to have subscriptions begin with these back numbers, several months after publication, has been so great that we feel the necessity of emphasizing through these columns the importance of renewing subscriptions promptly. While we are always glad to furnish the back numbers when possible we cannot tell how long the extra numbers we have printed will last. Many fine and interesting articles are being planned for the future numbers and to be sure of getting every issue it is well not to allow subscriptions to lapse. When addresses are changed notify us promptly.